



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Expanded Vessel Monitoring System Requirement in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before [Insert date 60 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Jennifer Jessup, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW,

Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at JJessup@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Karen Palmigiano, (206) 526-4491 or Karen.palmigiano@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

This request is for extension of a currently approved information collection.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has established large-scale depth-based management areas, referred to as Groundfish Conservation Areas (GCAs), where groundfish fishing is prohibited or restricted. These areas were specifically designed to reduce the catch of species while allowing healthy fisheries to continue in areas and with gears where little incidental catch of overfished species is likely to occur. Because NOAA needs methods to effectively enforce area restrictions, certain commercial fishing vessels are required to install and use a vessel monitoring system (VMS) that automatically send hourly position reports. Exemptions from the reporting requirement are available for inactive vessels or vessels fishing outside the monitored area. The vessels are also required to declare what gear will be used.

To ensure the integrity of the GCAs and Rockfish Conservation Areas, a pilot VMS program was implemented on January 1, 2004. The pilot program required vessels registered to

Pacific Coast groundfish fishery limited entry permits to carry and use VMS transceiver units while fishing off the coasts of Washington, Oregon and California. On January 1, 2007, the VMS program coverage was expanded on to include all open access fisheries in addition to the limited entry fisheries. Finally, in 2010, NMFS expanded the declaration reports to include several more limited entry categories.

II. Method of Collection

The installation/activation reports are available over the Internet. Due to the need for the owner's signature, installation reports must be faxed or mailed to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Hourly position reports are automatically sent from VMS transceivers installed aboard vessels. Exemption reports and declaration reports are submitted via a toll-free telephone number.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0573.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Review: Regular (extension of a currently approved collection).

Affected Public: Business or other for-profits organizations; individuals or households.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 1,500.

Estimated Time Per Response: VMS installation: 4 hours; VMS maintenance: 4 hours; installation, exemption and activation reports: 5 minutes each; and declaration reports: 4 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 12,872.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$4,350,375.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: October 26, 2016.

Sarah Brabson,

NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.

BILLING CODE: 3510-22-S

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